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ABSTRACT

The Suburban Teacher Education Program (STEP) was established at Texas Southern University in spring 1975. STEP is a 16 week experience which seeks to effectively prepare black preservice teachers for suburban "cross-over" schools. It consists of two eight week segments, the first of which is devoted to the involvement of participants in interdisciplinary seminars in mental health, sociology of suburbia, and education, and employs inquiry teaching techniques and methods. The remaining eight weeks consists of actual in-class student teaching where the theories studies, field trips made, and the newer insights and understanding gained from the reality-oriented and field-based activity of the first eight weeks are implemented. Students may receive a maximum of 12 semester hours credit for these experiences. Results of the first year's activity indicate that the program has made a significant impact on the student teachers, on the university, and the school community in which it is located. The program brings together a diverse supportive population and assists those students who seek to teach in suburbia in bridging the gulf that exists between the two cultures involved. (Author/CD)

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TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77004

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF FIELD SERVICES

Description of the SUBURBAN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM
SUBMITTED by the Division of Field Services, School of Education.

Director

Dean and TACTE Chief Institutional Representative

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
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The Suburban Teacher Education Program (STEP)

Introduction

Historically, Black colleges and universities in America have prepared teachers for a limited job market. During the long years of racially segregated schools, Black teachers were primarily prepared to teach Black children in Black schools in Black communities. In recent years, since the 1954 U. S. Supreme court decision, which conceivably created new employment opportunities for Black teachers, a new challenge has been presented Black colleges and universities.

This challenge to these institutions is to prepare their graduates for successful and effective teaching in multi-racial and multi-cultural situations - a need that came about not only as a result of social and legal changes in this country, but also from an expanding cultural pluralistic awareness that is international in scope.

Unlike its sister institutions in the state and throughout the nation, TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY, a predominantly Black urban university in Houston, Texas has evidenced continuous student growth over the past five years, increasing from slightly more than six thousand in 1970 to more than eighty-three hundred in 1975.

With the foregoing as a point of departure, over the last four years, TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY has sought to develop urban-based student teaching programs that provided options and choices in the type of setting in which students completed this experience - - programs that, in addition to emphasizing humanistic and affective concerns, also include activity that move, as McNeil (1971) suggested

"from an emphasis upon ascription to an emphasis upon results- there is less concern about how someone goes about his work but much more interest in what follows from this activity."

DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRAM

The Alternative Program described in this report and presented for consideration for the Distinguished Achievement Award is the SUBURBAN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM (STEP).

The (STEP) Program is the newest and probably the most innovative of our alternative student teaching experiences. This program is based on a lifetime of previous experiences and their interpretations of these experiences. Several situations and concerns, both local and national, led to its development.

A few years ago, the Houston Independent School District was required by federal court order to desegregate its professional teaching staff. This plan ordered by Federal District Judge Ben Connally in 1970 is commonly referred to as the "Singleton Ratio" or "teacher crossover". The court order required that faculties in all schools should be similar in composition to the school district's teacher racial or ethnic composition as of the date of the decree. Hence, where faculties had been all Black in schools with all Black enrollments and all White in schools with all white enrollments, faculties in every school in the district would become predominantly white. The "Singleton Ratio" required that faculties in The Houston Independent School District, where, for the past several years, we have placed more than seventy-five percent of our student teachers each semester, is required by the Singleton Ratio to assign teachers in each school at a ratio of 65% white / 35% Black with a 10% tolerance.

Thus began an era of decreasing job opportunity for Black teachers, both veterans and novice, in the Houston Independent School District.

In a different context but related to this problem, Roberts (1971), observed that racism had manifested itself in subtle and overt actions by an increasing number of white supervising teachers of Black student teachers from Texas Southern University. Instances of this sort were further amplified in seminars and in personal conferences held over the past three years, wherein, student teachers consistently reported incidents of what they perceived to be prejudical behavior by their supervising teachers.

Experience with "cross-over" supervising teachers (teachers who are assigned to schools where their racial or ethnic group is in the minority) have shown that far too many of them both Black and White, were inadequately prepared academically and emotionally for teaching or supervising in a cross-cultural or multi-cultural setting.

Many come from backgrounds quite different from those of persons in communities in which they were assigned, resulting many times in "a clash of culture" when these teachers try to impose their "standards" on students with cultural backgrounds different from their own.

Another development which led to the creation of this program was a statement by the Superintendent of the Houston Independent School District, which appeared to be a shift in personnel policy, in an article in a local daily newspaper. Superinterdent Billy Reagan suggested that the nation's seventh largest school district may no longer be a mecca for minority teachers if student enrollment did not increase. Reagan further indicated that the Houston Independent School District had lost 30,000 students over the past four years and that these students were probably now enrolled in adjacent suburban school districts. According to Reagan, who cited Texas Education Agency statistics, only one of these suburban districts had a substantial number of Black faculty members and that "unless other districts in the Houston area assume a more aggresive role in the hiring of Black teachers, it would be rather difficult for the beginning Black teacher to gain employment in the Houston district.

How do we equip and more effectively prepare student teachers to cope with and relate to these problems?

In an effort to avoid similar kinds of difficulties which might result when Black student teachers are assigned to schools in which the faculty and student population may be different from those in urban city schools, Black student teachers assigned in suburban school districts need meaningful and effective preparation in helping them strengthen their self-image; to objectively view their own attitudes, anxieties and prejudices; as well as the need to gain added insight into similar characteristics of their

supervising teachers and others with whom they will be working. Additionally, Black student teachers need to better understand their own culture and that of their pupils. The (STEP) program format includes two phases and several components. (See attached Process chart). During the first half of the semester students participate in interdisciplinary seminars in Education (inquiry teaching techniques), Mental Health and Sociology of Suburbia. /For an explanation of the seminar activity see attached Scope and Sequence Calendar/. The second half consists of in-class student teaching.

II. Objectives

The objectives of the program are to assist participants to:

1. Understand more clearly their attitudes, insecurities, anxieties and prejudices.
2. Understand their own and their pupils' environment and culture.
3. Develop skills to cope with #1 & 2 above.
4. Be competent in inquiry teaching methodology.
5. Obtain employment in a suburban district.

III. Personnel

The staff of the program in addition to the director, includes instructional specialists in Mental Health, Sociology of Suburbia and Education. When the program was instituted during the Spring Semester, (January, 1975), the three instructional specialists were secured from outside the university with funds obtained from several sources for program support. During the second semester of the program, in an effort to move toward institutionalizing this experience of the University, arrangements were made with the Psychology and Sociology Departments to have each assign a specialist to the program, who would serve in the areas of Mental Health and Sociology of Surburbia respectively.

Additionally, the Education seminar was conducted by a staff person from the School of Education. Students now receive from six to twelve semester hours credit in one or more of the three areas.

IV. Budget

When the program was initiated in the Spring of 1975, it was supported by funds from outside the School of Education's budget. During the first year (1974-75), support funds were secured from the following sources:

1.	Texas Southern University Faculty Research Committee	$4,000.00
2.	Houston office, National Conference of Christians and Jews	1,000.00
3.	The Menil Foundation Houston, Texas	2,000.00
	Total	$7,000.00

Currently, the program is supported by funds secured from:

1.	Texas Southern University Faculty Research Committee	$4,000.00
2.	Houston office, National Conference of Christians and Jews	500.00
3.	Jack and Jill Foundation of America, Houston Chapter	3,000.00
4.	The Menil Foundation, Houston, Texas	1,000.00
	Total	$8,500.00

Among the activities supported by these funds are stipends for student and staff travel during the first phase of the program; purchase of special supplies and materials; cross-cultural dining experiences for students; and stipends for special lecturers and consultants.

V. Contribution to the improvement of teacher education

For years, efforts have been underway to significantly affect and improve teacher preparation programs in the several colleges and universities in America. While these efforts have, in many instances, been successful in addressing many of the needs identified such as predological and technical competence, little in recent years, has been done to focus on affective and humanistic concerns in teacher preparation except at a select few institutions. Indeed, even less has been done to assist the minority group student in many of the larger institutions as he sought to reconcile many of the problems and concerns which confronted him- problems related to teaching in a society, in its varied communities, feeling competent, secure and being effective.

The STEP program was conceptualized and developed to address many of the above mentioned concerns to which traditionally structured student teaching programs have given little attention.

Results of the first year's activity revealed increases in participant's Acceptance of self, Capacity for Intimate contact and of being Inner-directed as measured by the Personal Orientation Inventory (POI). On the other hand, responses on one of the subjective measures revealed (At Mid-Semester) the desperate need for programs such as STEP. A participant, in the control group, expressed the following concern "They (supervising teachers in his/her school) have preconceived thoughts that because we are black we don't know much and will make many mistakes. Also, they keep their eyes open and ears perked for the slightest error. I have been aware of their stares." Inherent in the foregoing statements are the insidious effects of racism, feelings of low expectation and low self-regard which plague many Black student teachers involved in cross-over teaching situations.

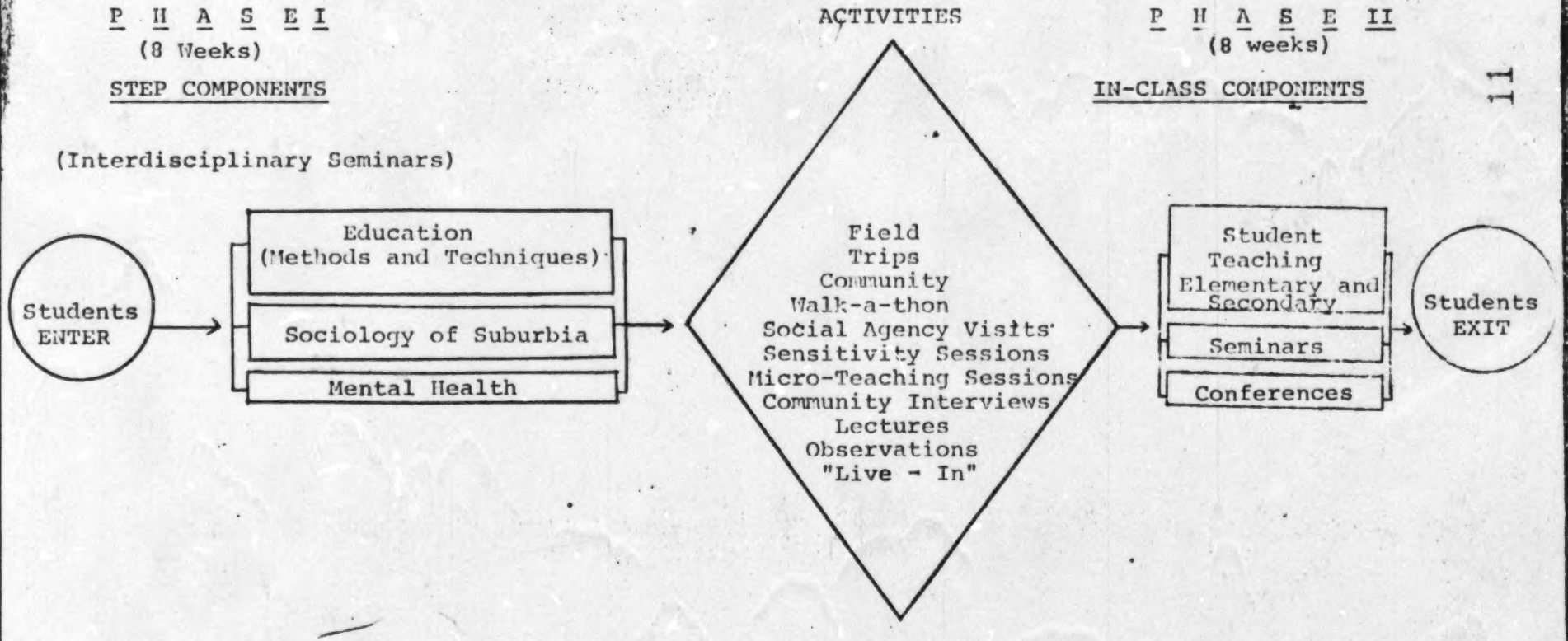
A statement made by one of the participants (in the experimental group) suggested that the program had achieved its goal. She stated "I feel that the first half of the program couldn't have done a better job of helping me achieve those goals set forth. It didn't totally change my views but it did teach me to have an open mind."

The School of Education at Texas Southern University is encouraged by the successful results we have had to date and look forward to its continuance. Further, we visualize not only the continuance of STEP at Texas Southern, but also the expansion of activity such as those included in STEP included in teacher preparation programs in an increasing number of institutions throughout the country in the immediate future.

VI. Evaluation methods and results

During the first year of the program it was conducted as an experimental research study, with an experimental and a control group consisting of seven students each. Evaluative instrument used were the Personality Orientation Inventory (POI) by Everett Shostrom; the Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory (MTAI) by Cook, Leeds and Callis and several subjective measures which were specially devised for the program participants. They were: "A midpoint Assessment" and "The Background Experiences survey " The same evaluative measures will be used in this year's program with possibly a few modifications in the subjective instruments to provide for clarity. It is also planned to use a subjective instrument at the end of the semester in addition to the POI and the MTAI. Six of the seven students in the experimental group (1974-75) are now located as teachers in suburban districts in Austin, Texas, Shreveport, Louisiana, Beaumont, Texas, Walnut Bend, Texas and in the Houston Independent School District.

The Suburban Teacher Education Program (STEP)
Process Chart
AN ALTERNATIVE STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCE AT TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY
Houston, Texas



Program Summary

The Suburban Teacher Education Program (STEP)

The Suburban Teacher Education Program (STEP) was designed during the summer of 1974 and was established at Texas Southern University in the Spring of 1975. A sixteen week experience which seeks to more effectively prepare Black pre-service teachers for suburban "cross-over" schools, It consists of two eight weeks segments, the first of which is devoted to the involvement of participants in interdisciplinary seminars in Mental Health, Sociology of Suburia and Education, employing inquiry teaching techniques and methods. The remaining eight weeks consist of actual in-class student teaching where, the theories studied, the field trips made and the newer insights and understanding gained from reality-oriented and field-based activity of the first eight weeks, will be implemented. Students may receive a maximum of twelve semester hours credit for these experiences.

For the present and past academic years, the program has received financial support from several sources. Included are: a $4,000.00 research grant each year from Texas Southern University's Faculty Research committee; a $1,000.00 grant in 1974-75 and a $500.00 grant in 1975-76 from the Houston office of the National Conference of Christians and Jews; a $2,000.00 grant in 1974-75 and a $1,000.00 grant in 1975-76 from the Houston Menil Foundation; and in 1975-76, a $3,000.00 grant from the Jack and Jill of America Foundation. Results of the first year's activity indicate that the program has made a significant impact on the student teachers involved, on the university and in the school-community in which it is located.

The program provides another option for student teachers. It brings together a diverse supportive population and most of all assists those students who seek to teach in suburbia in bridging the gulf that exist between the two cultures involved.